

Ironwood Forest National Monument
Draft Goals and Objective on Vegetation and Special Status Species.
May 26, 2004
Comment Summary

The following are summarized comments from the public meeting conducted Wednesday, May 26, 2004 at the Pima County Parks and Recreation Center in Tucson, Arizona. A brief summary of the May 19, 2004 workshop was followed by a presentation by Mark Dimmitt (ASDM), and a brief overview of draft goals for vegetation and special status species.

Attendees worked in two breakout discussion groups and discussed the draft goals and objectives.

The comment summary below combines comments from both breakout groups.

General Comments

- It would be helpful to have the goals and objectives ahead of time to think about them before the meeting (web or week prior to meeting).
- Add overarching goal to pursue cooperative agreements with other landowners and agencies for management of land/resources within and adjacent to the IFNM.
- Educate the public on the Sonoran Desert Ecosystem.
- Implement research programs to identify threats to the species and ways to alleviate those threats.
- Biggest threat is OHV traffic.

Specific Comments on the Draft Goals and Objectives for Vegetation and Special Status Species¹

GOAL NUMBER 1: *Restore, protect, or enhance the diversity and distribution of natural vegetation communities.*

- Does the goal need to be more specific?
- Make sure “restore” is not ‘absolute’ as some areas provide benefits to wildlife, vegetation, etc.
- Would like to see the word “protect” at first list.
- Objection to the use of the word “restore” because it is too general – what do you restore to?
- Discussion on “reclamation” vs. “restoration.” You can reclaim, but not restore.

¹ The goals and objectives were numbered for capturing public comments only and do not indicate a hierarchy or priority of importance.

Objective Number 1: *Manage land uses to achieve the Desired Plant Community within the monument, which is identified based on the ecological site potential, therefore establishing a basis for adequate wildlife habitat and stable watershed functions.*

- Will there be a map showing desired future conditions (DFC)? There needs to be some text in objective to define what that DFC is, or the criteria.
- Include NRCS site guides.
- Wordsmith into a few “bite-size” sentences.
- “Based on ecological site potential”—should begin integrating “uses.”

Objective Number 2: *Manage land uses and implement restoration as necessary to ensure the Desired Plant Community has a long-term stable or improving ecological condition (i.e. species composition, erosion rates, etc.)*

- This objective may fall under Objective Number 1, but as a subset.
- Use “reclamation” rather than “restoration.”
- What is the definition of “reclamation?”
- Replace “i.e.” with “e.g.”, and remove “etc.” [because the list is long].
- Need to have an objective to manage off-road vehicle use (perhaps this falls under objective 2 as alternative ways of achieving the objective).

Objective Number 3: *The use and perpetuation of local, native plant species will be emphasized when restoring or rehabilitating disturbed or degraded rangelands.*

- Aren’t there some beneficial non-native species?
- Add “Desired Plant Community” in glossary addressing/adding “local” (in objective 2) and delete objective 3 instead because it’s redundant.

Objective Number 4: *Manage harvest, collection, and/or salvage of desert vegetation for personal and commercial uses (including campfires) in accordance with monument objectives and State of Arizona Native Plant Law, taking into consideration potential traditional/cultural uses.*

- There should not be collection of downed wood (this could be an alternative, rather than in objective) because it provides, shade, habitat benefits, etc.
- Change “campfires” to “firewood.”

General Notes from Goal 1 Discussion:

- Action item for later – manage collection of downed wood/firewood for campfires (even on monument) [types of wood, percent collected/used].
- Should be no collecting of ironwood.
- The firewood is not where the campfire occurs. Users generally have to travel from campsite to collect.
- By some specific time, implement a process to identify indicator species by vegetation community and develop criteria for monitoring those indicators - Pima County and the U.S. Forest Service are doing this for the Sonoran Desert [this should be committee of experts].
- BLM will collaborate with adjacent owners/managers to minimize or eliminate invasive species on those adjacent lands.

GOAL NUMBER 2: *Manage invasive species to limit their impact on natural resources and processes.*

- Whose list of invasive species does/will BLM use? Will that be in alternatives or specified in the objectives?
- Define the invasive species.
- “Eliminate” instead of “Manage.”
- There may be a need to add an education objective (this may be part of an alternative for Objective Number 3) – private landowners should be informed re: invasive species that could affect the IFNM.

Objective Number 1: *Reduce adverse impacts to natural plant and animal communities associated with non-native, invasive species.*

- There are native invasive species. Maybe take out “non-native” from the objective.
- Are non-native trees on private land a problem?
- Delete this objective.

Objective Number 2: *Monitor the distribution and abundance of non-native, invasive species throughout the monument.*

- Add “inventory, and” before monitor.

Objective Number 3: *Implement management and treatment actions to reduce the distribution and abundance of the non-native in the area and their impact of the community, in accordance with a management plan.*

- Missing words in line 2, it should read “...non-native invasive species in...”

GOAL NUMBER 3: *Maintain or restore ecosystem health and native biodiversity.*

- Replace “maintain and restore” with “conserve and enhance.”
- Most important concept in the goal is “healthy ecosystem.”
- Need to add a monitoring objective.
- Create a new objective to “Evaluate proposals to restore ecosystems (with documented histories) that no longer exist within the IFNM (e.g., Spring that supported Gila Top Minnow)”

Objective Number 1: *Management and implementation of all resource programs must consider the standards component of the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.*

- No specific comments were received on this objective.

Objective Number 2: *Acquire non-Federal lands within the monument based on the potential to maintain or restore ecosystem health and native biodiversity.*

- Add “...lands from willing sellers...”

- Add "...lands exclusively from uncoerced, willing sellers..."
- Replace "maintain and restore" with "conserve."
- Support conservation easements under "acquire non-federal lands..."

Objective Number 3: *Evaluate proposals to enhance wildlife populations through reintroductions, transplants, and supplemental stockings of wildlife species.*

- Need to add, "in cooperation/coordination with AGFD."
- Need to add, "in conjunction with AGFD."

GOAL NUMBER 4: *Conserve and recover threatened and endangered species and their habitats, and manage to prevent the listing of additional species.*

- Do not reintroduce threatened or endangered species that are not here (in IFNM) now. Careful evaluation is needed.
- Delete words after comma.
- Add a new objective to provide sufficient law enforcement to prevent resource damage.
- To all objectives, add State and BLM species.

Objective Number 1: *Implement monitoring programs for known populations of listed and candidate species. Where monitoring identifies threats to these populations, take actions to protect the species and their habitats.*

- If BLM's goal is to prevent listing of additional species, may want to monitor for other species (e.g., State species of special concern and BLM sensitive species).
- Delete second sentence.

Objective Number 2: *Acquire lands that contain habitat for listed or proposed listed species.*

- Add "exclusively from non-coerced willing sellers."
- Add "from willing sellers."

Objective Number 3: *Within the range/distribution of listed or proposed species, livestock grazing allowable use will conform to the guidelines described in the "Not Likely to Adversely Affect" section of Guidance Criteria for Determinations of Effects of Grazing Permit Issuance and Renewal on Threatened and Endangered Species (Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona and New Mexico, 1999), or any subsequent agreed upon amendment to these guidelines.*

- Delete "livestock grazing" (also refer to notes from previous week [5/19/04])

Objective Number 4: *Continue to support recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species that occur on the monument.*

- This objective seems redundant – delete it.

Objective Number 5: *Update the BLM Sensitive Species List for the monument, and implement management decisions to support their conservation.*

- Ok.

Objective Number 6: *Continue to support conservation efforts for species occurring on the monument that are identified as BLM Sensitive Species or designated as rare or sensitive by resource management agencies.*

- Needs to specify, designated “by BLM...” rather than any resource management agency, which could cause confusion/controversy in the future.
- This objective seems redundant – delete it.

General Notes from Goal 4 Discussion:

- You can manage to prevent a listing, but you can’t prevent a listing by managing just in the monument.
- BLM is required to manage to prevent future decline of species (to the extent possible/that these species occur on BLM land).